

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 DODE-00 ACDA-05 PM-03 MC-02 SS-15

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O R 161500Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5739 IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USMTM DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

COMIDEASTFOR

USCINCEUR

S E C R E T SANA 1513

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SA, YE

SUBJ: BRIEFING OF PRESIDENT HAMDY RE SAUDI MILITARY ASSISTANCE

REF: SANA 1487 AND STATE 139599 (NOTAL)

BEGIN SUMMARY: DURING JUNE 16 BRIEFING ON SAUDI MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO YEMEN, PRESIDENT HAMDY EXPRESSED HIS "HEARTFELT APPRECIATION" FOR US EFFORTS TO DATE WHILE CONTINUING TO EXPRESS CONFIDENCE IN SAUDI INTENTION MOVE EVENTUALLY DESPITE "BUREAUCRATIC DELAYS". HE REQUESTED, HOWEVER, THAT US CONTINUE TO "EXPLAIN" TO SAUDIS NEED FOR MODERNIZATION OF YEMENI ARMY AS BULWARK AGAINST SPREAD OF EXTREMIST IDEOLOGY IN THE PENINSULA. AGREEING WITH ME THAT SAUDI ARABIA HAS PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY TO HELP YEMEN, HAMDY ALSO HOPED THAT USG MIGHT FIND IT POSSIBLE TO

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CONSIDER PROVISION OF SOME DIRECT MILITARY ASSISTANCE.

HAMDI ALSO REQUESTED THAT I BRIEF FOREIGN MINISTER ON RESULTS OF NEXT MEETING BETWEEN PRINCE SULTAN AND AMBASSADOR AKINS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE DEPUTY COMMANDER IN CHIEF GHASHMI WITH IDEAS ON HOW TO APPROACH SAUDIS WHEN LATTER MAKES HIS PROPOSED VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA. HAMDI CONCLUDED BY EMPHASIZING IMPORTANCE OF NEED FOR COORDINATION BETWEEN US AND YEMEN VIS A VIS SAUDI ARABIA ON MATTER OF MODERNIZATION PROGRAM. IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT HAMDI STILL HOPES FOR SPEEDY SAUDI ACTION EVEN THOUGH HE DID NOT APPEAR SURPRISED OR UPSET BY THE DELAYS. HAMDI HAS RAISED POSSIBILITY OF DIRECT USG MILITARY ASSISTANCE BEFORE, REFLECTING YEMENI PSYCHO-POLITICAL DESIRE TO COMPLEMENT SAUDI MILITARY AID WITH SOME USG PARTICIPATION AT A TIME WHEN LEFT-WING EXTREMISM IS ON THE MARCH IN LOWER RED SEA REGION. END SUMMARY

1. AS PROPOSED BY FOREIGN MINISTER AL-ASNAG (SEE SANA 1487) PRESIDENT HAMDI RECEIVED ME THIS AFTERNOON, JUNE 16, FOR A BRIEFING ON THE MATTER OF SAUDI MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO YEMEN. DRAWING ON PARA 4 STATE 139599 I PROVIDED HAMDI WITH A GENERAL BACKGROUNDER WHILE EMPHASIZING US COMMITMENT TO MOVE QUICKLY ONCE SAUDI ARABIA MAKES DECISION TO EMBARK ON MODERNIZATION OF THE YEMEN ARMY.

2. PRESIDENT HAMDI EXPRESSED HIS "HEARFELT APPRECIATION" FOR US EFFORTS TO DATE, NOTING THAT SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT OFTEN MOVES SLOWLY DUE TO "BUREAUCRATIC DELAYS". HAMDI SAID THAT DESPITE THESE DELAYS HE IS STILL CONFIDENT SAUDI ARABIA WILL TAKE DECISION TO PROCEED PROMPTLY WITH MODERNIZATION PROGRAM. HE OBSERVED THAT DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO RIYADH THE SAUDIS ASSURED HIM THEY WOULD MOVE FORWARD AND HE REMAINS PREPARED TO TAKE THEM ON THEIR WORD. HE ASKED, HOWEVER, THAT USG CONTINUE TO "EXPLAIN" TO SAUDIS NEED FOR MODERNIZATION PROGRAM STRESSING TO THEM THAT A STRONG, STABLE YEMEN IS THE BEST BULWARK FOR SAUDI ARABIA AGAINST THE SPREAD OF EXTREMIST IDEOLOGIES IN THE PENINSULA.

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3. HAMDI CONTINUED THAT, OF COURSE, YEMEN'S PRIMARY NEED IS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND HE REGRETS HAVING TO SPEND ANY MONEY ON ARMS. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, YEMEN ALSO REQUIRES FOR BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SECURITY REASONS A REASONABLY EQUIPPED MODERN ARMY TO ACT AS BOTH A DETERRENT AS WELL AS A STABILIZING FORCE ENABLING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TO

GO FORWARD.

4. HAMDI AGREED WITH ME THAT SAUDI ARABIA HAS THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY IN THE PENINSULA TO HELP ITS LESS FORTUNATE AND WEAKER NEIGHBORS. HE WENT ON TO EXPRESS THE HOPE THAT THE USG MIGHT ALSO FIND IT POSSIBLE TO CONSIDER PROVIDING THE YEMENI ARMY WITH SOME DIRECT MILITARY ASSISTANCE EVEN IF IT WERE ONLY A TOKEN AMOUNT. I EXPLAINED THAT THE USG AT THE PRESENT TIME IS FOCUSING PRIMARILY ON DEVELOPMENTAL ASSISTANCE TO YEMEN, GIVEN THE COUNTRY'S POVERTY AND NEED FOR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. I ASSURED HIM, HOWEVER, THAT I WOULD CONVEY HIS REQUEST TO WASHINGTON.

5. HAMDI INFORMED ME THAT YARG HAS PROPOSED TO PRINCE SULTAN A VISIT BY DEPUTY COMMANDER IN CHIEF GHASHMI TO RIYADH SHORTLY AFTER THE VISIT TO THAT CITY BY THE YEMENI PRIME MINISTER. (SEE SANA 1487) HE ASKED ME TO PROVIDE FOREIGN MINISTER AL-ASNAG WITH ANY INFORMATION I MIGHT HAVE DESCRIBING THE USG FOLLOW-UP WITH PRINCE SULTAN SO THAT GHASHMI MIGHT HAVE A BETTER IDEA OF HOW TO APPROACH SAUDIS WHEN HE MAKES HIS VISIT. I PROMISED AL-HAMDI I WOULD KEEP FOREIGN MINISTER ASNAG FULLY INFORMED.

6. HAMDI CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT IT IS IMPORTANT FOR US AND YEMEN TO COORDINATE THEIR EFFORTS VIS-A-VIS SAUDI ARABIA IN ORDER THAT "OUR SAUDI FRIENDS WILL HAVE A TRUE PICTURE OF WHAT IS GOING ON IN YEMEN AND OF THE IMPORTANCE TO SAUDI ARABIA OF A STABLE PROGRESSIVE NEIGHBOR ON ITS BORDERS".

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7. COMMENT: HAMDI WAS RELAXED BUT ATTENTIVE THROUGHOUT MY BRIEFING. HE DID NOT SEEM SURPRISED OR UPSET OVER SAUDI DILATORINESS. YET IT WAS OBVIOUS HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE SOME SPEEDY RESULTS. I INTEND TO BRIEF THE FOREIGN MINISTER ON AMBASSADOR AKINS' NEXT MEETING WITH PRINCE SULTAN UNLESS INSTRUCTED TO THE CONTRARY. THIS IS BY NO MEANS THE FIRST TIME HAMDI HAS RAISED POSSIBILITY OF DIRECT USG MILITARY ASSISTANCE. DEPUTY COMMANDER IN CHIEF GHASHMI HAS ALSO CONSISTENTLY MADE SAME PITCH AS HAVE OTHER PROMINENT YEMENIS OVER PAST TWO YEARS. WE HAVE IN RESPONSE TOLD YARG LEADERSHIP THAT IT MUST LOOK TO RICH SAUDI NEIGHBOR FOR HELP IN THIS REGARD. WE REALIZE, OF COURSE, THAT THIS ADVICE IS BEGINNING TO RING HOLLOW IN YEMENI EARS IN VIEW SAUDI DILATORINESS.

IN ANY EVENT, REPEATED YEMENI REQUESTS FOR USG
ASSISTANCE DO NOT REFLECT EXPECTATION THAT USG
WOULD FILL SAG ROLE BUT RATHER STRONG YEMENI
PSYCHO-POLITICAL DESIRE TO GET USG DIRECTLY
INVOLVED IN ITS SECURITY AFFAIRS, ALBEIT IN A SMALL WAY,
AT A TIME WHEN LEFT-WING EXTREMISM SEEMS TO BE ON THE MARCH IN THE
LOWER RED SEA REGION.
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